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Environment Department Provides Funding for Watershed Protection

(Santa Fe, NM) — In order to protect New Mexico waterways from certain types of pollution, The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) will be distributing funding to local governments, non-governmental groups and private citizens in the coming months. These funds come from the federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h), which is geared toward addressing nonpoint source pollution, that is pollution attributed to runoff or other sources that cannot be traced to a single point of origin.

To announce this drive, the Department will issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) on October 14. Three public meetings will also be held in Taos, Silver City and Rio Rancho.

The public meetings to be held as follows:

In **Taos** on October 14 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center, 202 Chamisa Rd;

In **Silver City** on October 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the Grants County Commission Meeting Room, 1400 Hwy. 180 E; and

In **Rio Rancho** on October 20 from 8:30 am to noon at the Rio Rancho City Council Chamber, 2nd floor conference room, 3900 Southern Boulevard.

The meeting in Rio Rancho will coincide with the Middle Rio Grande Water Quality Standards Workgroup meeting.

This year, NMED intends to focus the RFPs to provide a stronger emphasis on watersheds that contain stream segments with approved Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants or where data has been assessed for future TMDLs.

A TMDL is a watershed budget for pollutant influx to a watercourse. TMDLs are developed by the Department with the cooperation of local water users and citizens. These planning documents provide pollution reduction targets and guidance on how to reduce pollutant loads.

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The RFPs are separated into two initiatives. One RFP will fund the creation of watershed groups that will address TMDLs in the future. A second RFP will provide financial support for established watershed groups that are ready to implement on-the-ground projects to address TMDLs. All governmental, non-governmental, or private citizens are encouraged to apply.

The RFP will be issued on October 14 and will be available at www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb or by request.

For more information, contact Julie Arvidson at (505) 476-3069 (julie_arvidson@nmenv.state.nm.us) or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director at (505) 827-0314.

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